

ANDREW J. BROWN ACADEMY

2009-2010 Performance Analysis

Core Question 3: Is the school meeting its operations and access obligations?

3.1. Has the school satisfactorily completed all of its organizational and governance obligations?	
STANDARD	School has substantially completed all of its organizational and governance obligations as specified in the Compliance and Governance Handbook, including: a) maintenance of adequate “compliance and governance binder” containing all required documents; b) completion of criminal background checks on all Board members; c) transparency of meetings and decision-making in accordance with open meetings obligations; d) maintenance of adequate Board minutes. Any concerns are minor and the school presents a credible plan to address them.

2009-10 Performance: Meets Standard

In 2009-10, Andrew J. Brown routinely completed its organizational and governance obligations as specified in the charter and fulfilled its reporting requirements to the Mayor’s Office and the Indiana Department of Education in a timely manner. National Heritage Academies, the school’s education management organization, is responsible for maintaining the compliance binder and documents, which have been satisfactorily completed over time.

The school routinely documents that background checks are conducted for all board members and complies with public access and open door policy by posting notices of board meetings. Board meeting minutes are always kept and have been sent to the Mayor’s Office in a timely manner. Although the minutes of board meetings reflect discussions of a diverse range of school issues, minutes do not reflect details of discussions. Minutes should provide greater detail to provide documentation of important discussions, deliberations, and decisions.

Based on their performance in the 2009-10 academic year, AJB has met the Mayor’s Office standard for this indicator.

3.2. Is the school’s physical plant safe and conducive to learning?	
STANDARD	Significant health and safety code requirements are being met AND the facility generally provides a safe environment that is conducive to learning, based on conditions such as: a design well-suited to meet the curricular and social needs of its students, faculty, and community members; a size appropriate for the enrollment and student-teacher ratios in each class; good maintenance and security; well-maintained equipment and furniture that match the educational needs of the students; and accessibility to all students.

2009-10 Performance: Meets Standard

In 2009-10, the Andrew J. Brown Academy facility met all health and safety code requirements and provided a safe environment conducive to learning. The facility's design, size, maintenance, security, equipment and furniture are all adequate to meet the school's needs. The school is accessible to all including people with physical disabilities. The Mayor's Office monitoring of Andrew J. Brown Academy's compliance with health and safety code requirements has not revealed any significant concerns related to these obligations. Accordingly, the school meets the Mayor's Office standard for this indicator.

3.3. Has the school established and implemented a fair and appropriate pupil enrollment process?	
STANDARD	The school's enrollment process complies with applicable law; there are minimal documented parent complaints suggesting that it is not being implemented fairly or appropriately; AND the school has engaged in outreach to students throughout the community.

2009-10 Performance: Meets Standard

In 2009-10, Andrew J. Brown's admission and enrollment practices met the requirements of Indiana's charter school law. The Mayor's Office received no complaints from parents regarding the school's enrollment practices. The Mayor's Office received copies of Andrew J. Brown's enrollment policies and marketing plans. The school has implemented a lottery system and gives preference to siblings of current students, as allowed for by law. Based on the 2009-10 academic year, the school meets the Mayor's Office standard for this indicator.

3.4. Is the school properly maintaining special education files for its special needs students?	
STANDARD	The school is fulfilling its legal obligations regarding special-needs students, as indicated by conditions such as the following: individualized education plans are up-to-date, student evaluations or re-evaluations have occurred within the appropriate timeframe, files contain the relevant required information, such as, file log sheet, parent consent form, documentation of case conference notification to parents and other conference participants and signatures of attendees at case conferences.

2009-10 Performance: Approaching Standard

The Mayor's Office contracted a team of experts to conduct an audit of the school's special education files in September 2009. The focus of this audit was to determine whether all required components - including items such as parent consent forms, documentation of case conference notifications to parents and other conference participants, signatures of attendees at case conferences and up-to-date Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) - were contained in the files. Additionally, IEPs were reviewed to ensure inclusion of all necessary information, including measurable annual goals, a statement of how the parent will be informed of the student's progress, and the date of the student's re-evaluation. The team did not interview parents or evaluate the school's provision of special education services beyond the information included in the special education files.

In the review, files were found to be in good condition, with few exceptions. All IEPs were found to be current, testing data was included and each file contained a log sheet. The school attributed the quality of special education files to improvements made to the special education program at AJB. According to the school, AJB works in partnership with National Heritage Academies to ensure the appropriate maintenance of special education files. The school has increased the number of special education staff and provides ongoing training to staff regarding the proper maintenance of files. The school implemented internal processes for annually reviewing and auditing files, as well.

One area of concern found during the file review pertained to case conferences being held in a timely manner for students who were new to AJB. According to state law, AJB must conduct case conferences for every student who enrolls at AJB with a current IEP who received special education services at their previous school. These case conferences must occur within 10 instructional days of the student's enrollment. A number of files at AJB contained IEPs for students who were new to the school but no documentation existed verifying that entrance case conferences were being conducted for these students within the appropriate timeframe.

In summary, the school is not yet fulfilling all legal obligations regarding proper maintenance of files for students with special needs and requires some but not considerable improvement. The maintenance of special education files at Andrew J. Brown Academy therefore is approaching the Mayor's Office standard for this indicator.

3.5. Is the school fulfilling its legal obligations related to access and services to English as a Second Language (ESL) students?	
STANDARD	The school is fulfilling its legal obligations regarding ESL students, as indicated by conditions such as the following: appropriate staff have a clear understanding of current legislation, research and effective practices relating to the provision of ESL services; relationships with students, parents, and external providers that are well-managed and comply with law and regulation.

Not Applicable. This sub-question was not examined in 2009-10 because the school did not serve a significant number of ESL students.